



MESSAGE FROM YVONNE

Firstly I want to thank all the volunteers that kept the rescue running whilst I took a holiday.

We saw a very wet February, I believe the wettest on record. When we came back in the middle of February the daffodils were already in flower. To my delight I found frog spawn in the pond on the 28th and a male blue tit feeding the female in the nest box. This indicates that she might be sitting on eggs. They can lay 7-16 eggs but the average is 8-12. They lay one per day and they incubate them for 14-15 days, they time this to when the caterpillars are plentiful. They usually lay their eggs in April or May, so maybe this is a sign of an early summer.

We are beginning to release some of our hedgehogs and we are getting calls for ones that need our help. So I guess we will begin to get busy again. Many of the volunteers are seeing their hedgehogs emerging from hibernation in their gardens with much excitement.



Find out about Poppy's story in our *Who's in, who's out?* section

I have a few talks booked in and we are being asked to attend events. More on this elsewhere in the newsletter.

As always a big thank you to all the people who help run the rescue, whether by helping in the hospital or behind the scenes.

And lastly, Lynne has kindly been our treasurer for the last few years but would like to hand this on at the end of this year. So, if anyone likes figures and balancing the books we would love to hear from you.

Yvonne



SPRING GARDEN CHECKLIST

To help hedgehogs this season:

- **Delay garden tidying** for as long as possible so insects can emerge from dead stems.
- **Leave some areas undisturbed** to protect late hibernating hedgehogs.
- Create or maintain small **gaps in fences** to allow movement between gardens.
- Check **ponds have shallow edges** or escape routes
- **Avoid using slug pellets** and other **chemicals**.
- **Leave garden waste in the garden** where possible – move leaves onto borders rather than disposing of them, as they will rot down and improve the soil.
- **Seek advice** if hedgehogs are **active during the day**, although females may be out foraging.
- **Provide fresh water** in a shallow bowl.
- If hedgehogs are present, **offer supplementary food** such as dry meat-based cat biscuits.

BRING A HEDGEHOG TALK TO YOUR SCHOOL OR GROUP

Are you interested in learning about hedgehogs while raising money for HR at the same time?

Yvonne delivers informative talks for schools, W.I.s, gardening and other local community groups. They are full of practical advice on the everyday dangers hedgehogs face in our gardens and parks, and teach you how you can help.

There is a charge for the talks and every penny raised from these talks goes straight into hedgehog care, including medication, food and bedding.

Our hedgehog stall is also available for fairs and events, with informative leaflets and gifts. If you have a question about your local hedgehog, come along to these events to have a chat and get some advice.

To book Yvonne for your school or group, get in touch today at hedgehogrescue.info/helpful-information/talks-events and help raise funds for hedgehog rescue and rehabilitation.





Hedgehog Rescue NEWSLETTER Spring 2026

HEDGEHOGS: NIGHTTIME NEIGHBOURS

Hedgehogs are primarily nocturnal, which means as we're tucking ourselves into bed they're heading out for a busy night ahead. As dusk falls, they emerge from their nests to forage, explore and patrol their surroundings, often remaining active until the early hours of the morning.

Despite their small size they can travel large distances, sometimes several kilometers each night as they move through woodlands, gardens and urban areas. Along the way they scent mark to establish their territories to other hedgehogs and to help them navigate back to their nests. In built-up areas, access between gardens is vital. You can help keep them safe on their journey by making a hedgehog highway – a CD-sized gap in your fence that allows them to roam between gardens.

While their eyesight is limited, hedgehogs have developed an excellent sense of smell and hearing to help them when foraging in the dark. These heightened senses help them locate insects, worms and slugs hidden in foliage or below the soil.



Providing a shallow dish of fresh water and a small amount of meat-based

cat food can offer additional support, particularly during dry or cold periods. For such small creatures, they can be surprisingly noisy eaters! You can hear them snuffling and grunting as they rustle through the undergrowth.

As well as searching for their dinner, hedgehogs also like to do some housekeeping. They use this time to repair and insulate their nests using leaves, grass and other natural materials to prepare for hibernation and to protect themselves from predators. They often maintain multiple nests within their territory and may choose a different one each night.

If you would like to make your garden more hedgehog friendly, try adding some log and leaf piles to your garden for them to take back to their nests.

As hedgehogs are active during the night, spotting one in the day can be a cause for concern. If you find a hedgehog during the day, please ensure you call your local wildlife rescue for advice.



Hannah



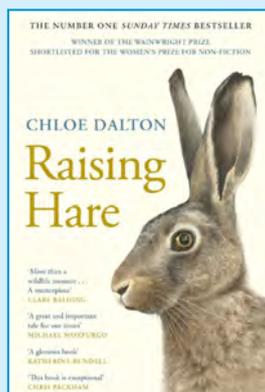
BOOK REVIEW: RAISING HARE by Chloe Dalton

If you love British wildlife, this book will tell you everything you will ever need to know about our beautiful, majestic hare.

It is about the journey of the author finding a leveret on the side of a track on an afternoon walk. Four hours later with darkness falling she decides to pick it up and take it home.

I wondered how you could write a whole book about hand rearing a hare, but as I started reading, I realised how much research had gone into writing this book, as the author found out, there is not much information out there on raising a hare!

What I took mostly from this amazing read was that the hare and the author co-existed in her house (with some



adjustments) and that the hare chose to stay in her home, garden and eventually the surrounding countryside but always coming back albeit sometimes after a few days away....hedgehogs are similar as some of us know!!

I can't recommend this book enough if you love a true wildlife story and learn a lot in the process! Some of the author's lines really resonated with me, I quote:

"When the leveret really wanted to look at me, it would turn one eye towards me and look at me from side-on, but even when it was facing away from me, I know it could see me. This gave the leveret a watchful careful air, and also suggested that it felt comfortable with me. I was only able to share its space because it allowed me to."

Victoria





CARING FOR HEDGEHOGS - FAQs

Where should I place my hedgehog house?

Choose the quietest spot in your garden, ideally under shrubs or trees for shelter. Position the entrance toward the south or west to protect against cold northerly and easterly winds.

Can I treat the hog house to preserve it?

You may apply water-based fence paint to the exterior but avoid painting inside. When Mike builds our boxes, he uses a traditional Japanese wood-burning technique.

Should I put anything inside?

Add some dry leaves or straw (but not hay, as it can trap moisture and entangle the hedgehog's legs like a tourniquet). Leave space so the hedgehog can arrange its bedding to its liking.

When is it best to clean out the house?

First, make sure there is not a mother with babies inside. If so, leave them undisturbed and keep the area peaceful. Avoid showing others, as disturbance can cause the mother to abandon or harm her young.

If you confirm the box is empty or only contains a sleeping hedgehog, gently transfer the animal to a secure carrier using gardening gloves.

Place the hedgehog in a shed or garage, preferably early in the morning on a warm, sunny day so the box has time to dry before evening.

This also means less stress for the hedgehog, who will likely stay asleep during cleaning.

Remove old bedding and either burn it or douse it with boiling water to kill parasites. Clean excrement with disinfectant suitable for guinea pigs or birds, then pour boiling water into all joints. Allow the cleaned box to dry outdoors in sunlight.

In the evening, refill the box with fresh straw and dry leaves, leaving extra nearby so the hedgehog can help itself if needed. Once night falls, release the hedgehog back into the garden from the carrier, allowing it to return to its refreshed home.

What is the best time of year to clean the box?

The best times of year for cleaning the hedgehog house are early spring or late September.

Should you feed the hedgehogs in your garden?

It is useful to offer food when they first wake up or in autumn, especially for juveniles needing weight for hibernation. If your garden attracts plenty of insects, they may find enough food naturally.

This also depends on how rich their territory is and the condition of surrounding gardens.

What should I feed the hedgehogs?

We use a mixture that consists of chicken based cat biscuits, hedgehog biscuits, semi-moist, kitten biscuits and a few calci-worms.

Offer a shallow dish of water in a flat-bottomed terracotta dish so it cannot be tipped up.

Do hedgehogs have fleas, and if so, will they infect my cat or dog?

Hedgehogs can have fleas (*Archaeopsylla erinacei*) but they are host-specific and will not infest cats, dogs, or carpets.

Wild animals commonly carry some fleas, but heavy infestations usually signal injury or disease. In such cases, consult a rescue for assistance.

Hedgehog fleas have decreased, likely because there are fewer hedgehogs to host them and increased chemical use in gardens, parks, and farmland.



Fostered hog Verity gets stuck into some scrambled egg





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Are hedgehogs legally protected?

Hedgehogs do have some degree of legal protection in the UK. They are listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs with certain methods listed, or to keep them as pets.

They are also listed under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), which prohibits cruel treatment of hedgehogs, and a species of 'principal importance' under the NERC Act, which is meant to confer a 'duty of responsibility' to public bodies.

Unfortunately, none of these laws deal with the root causes of the decline.

Should they be legally protected?

Perhaps. The most sensible thing to push for would be a reclassification of hedgehogs under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to make them a schedule 5 species. This would introduce a legal imperative to search for hedgehogs in developments and a legal imperative to mitigate for them.

In 2015 PTES and BHPS campaigned alongside Oliver Colville MP to try and get the hedgehog listed on schedule



Derek was dehydrated and infected with ringworm. He's making steady progress

5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Will dogs and cats bother hedgehogs?

Cats rarely bother hedgehogs except for eating their food; a feeding station can help prevent this.

Dogs, however, may act aggressively towards hedgehogs, so it is best to keep dogs on a lead at night and walk them away if a hedgehog is present. Dogs might discover nesting hedgehogs and disturb them, which can endanger young hedgehogs. Effective training helps you recall or distract your dog, and you may need to walk it more often while hedgehogs are raising their young.

Where do you release rescued hedgehogs?

When hedgehogs arrive at the rescue, we collect finder details and have them fill out a transfer of responsibility form, asking if they would like the hedgehog returned, and most do. If not, or the original location is not suitable, we aim to release the hedgehog nearby to ensure proper habitat and food, and to minimise disease spread, as hedgehogs are territorial.

Finders receive an education pack and, by the time of release, are encouraged to follow our advice, such as providing shelters, creating feeding stations, and removing hazards from their garden.

Yvonne

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We are a volunteer led organisation, relying on public donations to continue our work helping injured hedgehogs across South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Bath, Somerset and Bristol. Please support us if you can. Every pound makes a direct difference.

MAKE A DONATION (PAYPAL): 100% of donations go directly towards hedgehog care.

GIVE A GIFT (AMAZON WISH LIST): regularly updated to match what we need at different times of the year.

RAISE FUNDS WHILE YOU SHOP (EASYFUNDRAISING): search for Hedgehog Rescue South Gloucestershire and raise donations automatically.

ADOPTION PACK: a certificate, newsletter, hedgehog beanie, pin badge and pen.

100% of profits support hedgehogs in our care.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND LINKS: HEDGEHOGRESCUE.INFO/SUPPORT-US/





HOG OF THE MONTH - DEE

Dee arrived weighing barely half what she should, at just 515g. She was emaciated, dehydrated and suffering from ringworm. She was also dragging her rear right leg. She was in such a poor state that we didn't know if she would make it through the first few days.

She's such a gentle good-natured hedgehog, and happily, after ten days of fluids, painkillers and anti-inflammatory meds for her leg, she began to stabilise and slowly regained strength. She is now a healthy 1157g and doing well, with a brighter appetite and far more energy each day. She is on a restricted diet so will be able to curl up properly when released... and that date is not far off as she is nearly ringworm free and near the end of her worming treatment.

It's just so rewarding for all the volunteers to see a hog who seemed to be at death's door make such a turnaround within a few weeks. It makes the hard work worthwhile.



UPDATE on Sooty:

Sooty was featured in the last newsletter after having been through bonfire and covered in soot. He also had fluke, so was treated for that.

Great news - he has now fully recovered and has been released into a great garden near where he was found, weighing 800g.



WHO'S IN, WHO'S OUT

Karen



POPPY

Poppy came in with two siblings last year as a late autumn juvenile and was too small to hibernate. She was initially doing well, but is a very fussy eater so her weight plateaued. She's had treatments for various parasites and infections and has now been released back home at 998g.



LUNA

Luna came in December as a young adult. She had so many ticks you could hardly see her lovely face. We are pleased to say that she was released last Sunday weighing over 1kg. Doesn't she look sweet cautiously coming out of her house with straw on her head?



EDEN

Poor little Eden was found in an outhouse, coated in cement dust and weighing just over 700g. While she was at the rescue she initially had to have several days of baths to get rid of the persistent cement dust, and we also treated her for internal parasites and lungworm.

Happily, after a month of care, rest and good food, Eden was released into Lucy's hedgehog-friendly garden, weighing a healthy 961g. This garden was just a minute from where she was found, as she could not return there.





AND SOME WARNINGS - PLEASE MAKE SIMPLE CHANGES...

IVY

Ivy has suffered two areas of strimmer damage to her spines, leaving open wounds. Fortunately, neither shows signs of infection, so we hope she will have a full recovery.

As gardening work ramps up, we are seeing a sharp increase in hedgehogs injured or killed by trimmers, losing spines or even limbs as a result. Please check long grass and vegetation before you garden, as hogs do not run from noise: they curl into a ball, leaving them with no way to escape.



ANNETTE

Little Annette was found severely tangled in netting. Even when the skin looks fine, tight netting can cut off blood flow and cause deep tissue damage or internal injuries. Annette was given pain relief and anti-inflammatories, but sadly died four days after admission from unseen injuries.



If you find a hedgehog in netting, cut away what you can, but leave tightly wrapped sections for a professional. Prevent this by keeping netting and cages 30cm above ground, store unused nets, and cut up discarded pieces.

Karen

SEASONAL CHANGES IN HEDGEHOG BEHAVIOUR

Each season plays an important role in a Hedgehog's survival as their behaviour changes throughout the year.

Winter

From around October to March, hedgehogs enter a deep resting state where their body temperature drops, and their heart rate slows dramatically, allowing them to conserve energy while food is scarce.

While hibernating, hedgehogs do not eat or drink. Instead, they rely on the fat reserves they built up during autumn. They usually nest in sheltered places such as log piles, compost heaps, under sheds or in hedgehog houses. Interestingly, hedgehogs may occasionally wake up and even move to a different nesting spot before returning to hibernation.

Spring

As temperatures rise between March and May, hedgehogs begin to emerge from hibernation. Waking up is not instant - it can take several hours or even a few days before they're back on their feet.

After months without food or water, hedgehogs are extremely hungry and thirsty! Spring is an important time to rebuild their energy reserves. They feed on a variety of foods including insects, worms and fallen fruit.



Summer

Hedgehogs are most active during the summer months. May and June are peak breeding times, and males may even compete for females.

After a pregnancy of around 30-40 days, a female usually gives birth to four or five hoglets. The babies are born tiny and blind, weighing about 25g, (although HR

has had them in at 14g!) and stay with their mother for around six weeks while they grow and learn to forage.

Autumn

As autumn arrives, hedgehogs begin preparing for the long winter ahead. They spend weeks eating as much as possible to build up the fat reserves needed for hibernation. They also repair and build nests using leaves, grass and other natural materials to create warm shelters that will protect them from frost and predators during the winter months.

By the time winter returns, these preparations give hedgehogs the best chance of surviving until spring once again.

Hannah





FROM GARDENS TO DESERTS: HEDGEHOGS WORLDWIDE

When most people think of a hedgehog, they picture a spiky animal shuffling through a garden at dusk. While this is familiar in parts of Europe, hedgehogs are not all the same. In fact, there are many different species living across Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, each adapted to its environment. They range from woodland margins to deserts and steppes.

All hedgehogs belong to the family Erinaceidae and share key features. They are usually solitary, most are active at night, and they feed mainly on insects and other small invertebrates, with a wider mix of foods depending on species and season. Their spines help protect them from predators, and many species curl into a tight ball when threatened.

These shared traits make hedgehogs easy to recognise, but their lifestyles and habitats can be very different. In Europe, the most familiar species is the **EUROPEAN HEDGEHOG**. This is the hedgehog that visits gardens, parks and hedgerows under cover of darkness. It has become much less common in recent years due to habitat loss, busy roads and changes in farming.

Africa has several smaller hedgehog species that are well suited to drier conditions. The **AFRICAN PYGMY HEDGEHOG** is an example of this and is more familiar as it is sometimes kept as a pet in the UK. In the wild, this species lives in grasslands and scrub, staying active all year rather than hibernating. African hedgehogs cope well with heat and limited water.

Asia has the greatest variety of hedgehog species, although many are not widely known. In South Asia, hedgehogs can be found in dry grasslands and semi-



From top:
European Hedgehog, African Pygmy Hedgehog, Long-eared Hedgehog, Hugh's Hedgehog

desert areas. Many hedgehogs outside Europe are not well studied, even though habitat is changing rapidly as land is developed and farmed more intensively.

The **LONG-EARED HEDGEHOG** is distinctive, with large ears that help it lose heat and detect prey and predators. It is well adapted to dry steppe and semi-desert habitats, and often avoids the harshest true desert conditions. It is known for its agility and ability to survive in arid conditions. It is found throughout eastern Europe into Central Asia and the Middle East.

Another example is **HUGH'S HEDGEHOG**, which lives in grasslands and open countryside where temperatures can change dramatically between seasons. It is native to parts of central China and is also reported from parts of Mongolia.

If you are wondering if that is it for hedgehog species, no: you have also got Northern white breasted hedgehog, Southern white breasted hedgehog, Amur hedgehog, Daurian hedgehog, Algerian hedgehog, Somali hedgehog, South African hedgehog, Desert hedgehog, Brandts hedgehog, Indian hedgehog and Indian long-eared hedgehog.

Looking at these species together we can see how adaptable hedgehogs are. Some hibernate through cold winters while others stay active all year. Some live close to people while others avoid humans entirely. These

differences matter for conservation. By understanding that hedgehogs come in many forms and live all over the world, we can better appreciate them as a varied group of animals.

Liz





OUT AND ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY WITH THE HR STALL

It seems a long time ago now, but I attended Frampton Cotterell Parish Council's Carols Around the Christmas Tree with the Hedgehog Rescue stall.

The yuletide event raised a fantastic total of £156.70.

We are so pleased with this amount. Every little sale or donation on the day enables us to help more hedgehogs throughout the year, especially during the busiest months.

Many thanks to Frampton Cotterell Parish Council and to everyone who attended and donated. Since June last year, we have raised approximately £400 in total, which is wonderful!



Debs

MAKE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD HEDGEHOG FRIENDLY!

Across our areas, hedgehog help is not just about rescues, it is about making the urban areas easier for them to live in. The idea is simple: connect up gardens and green spaces so hedgehogs can roam safely to find food, mates and shelter. A gap in a fence, a tucked away log pile, and fewer garden hazards can make a real difference, and it is something most of us can do.

The fun part is that this works best as a neighbourhood effort. Postcode groups and local projects get streets involved, share tips, and map sightings so everyone can see where hedgehogs are active in the area. A few changes, repeated across a road or an estate, can turn a patchwork of isolated gardens into a proper hedgehog friendly network.

So why not have a friendly word with your neighbours this week, pick one simple change you can all make, and start your own little hedgehog highway? Spring is here.. the perfect time to do it!

DIARY DATES: TALKS AND EVENTS

Yvonne is always busy doing talks to Brownies, W.I.s and Garden Clubs, and the Hedgehog Rescue team regularly take the stall out to various community events to raise awareness about how to help hedgehogs as well as vital fundraising. Do pop by to say hello!

If you have a community event that you would like us to attend, would like to book Yvonne to come and do a talk, or would like to help with the stall, please do get in contact.

In the meantime, here's some of the events that Hedgehog Rescue will be attending in the next few months.

25th April • St Peter's Church, Henleaze •

Eco Fayre, Henleaze

Sat 6th June • Sugar Orchard Field, Old Sodbury •

Old Sodbury Village Day

Wed 15th July • 10am-2pm • Yate Shopping Centre •

Yate Ageing Better Festival

YVONNE'S TALKS

Please check with the event organisers if it's ok to attend these:

**7th March • 10am - 12pm
Bathampton Village Hall W.I.**

1st April • Wick Gardening Club

**2nd April • The Miners Club,
Coalpit Heath**

13th May • Wick W.I.



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facebook.com/hedgehogrescuesouthgloucestershire

